THE RAGTIMER

JULY/AUGUST 1974

PUBLISHED BY
THE RAGTIME SOCIETY
DEDICATED TO THE PRESERVATION OF CLASSICAL RAGTIME

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The above 15 titles by 15 different composers
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FOUNDED 1962
INCORPORATED 1970

THE RAGTIME SOCIETY
INCORPORATED

is a non - profit corporation having the following objects:

To preserve classical ragtime music and to pursue such other activities as shall serve to maintain and develop interest in classical ragtime music and music related thereto.

"YOUR ATTENTION PLEASE!"

IT'S BASH REGISTRATION TIME AGAIN.

THE RAGTIME SOCIETY INC.
10TH ANNUAL BASH
WEEKEND OF OCTOBER 19th, 1974

"THIS IS THE RAGTIMER WITH THE PARTICULARS!"

RAGTIME...
UNDER YOUR HAT

In this issue of THE RAGTIMER we begin with an important one-two.

1. Registration information for the 10th Annual Annual Bash of THE RAGTIME SOCIETY Inc. is attached for your use.
2. General details for the big weekend of October 19th, 1974 follow at the end of this editorial.

If you plan to attend please meet the registration date requirements as far ahead of October 4th as possible. Because of the need to make firm and limited commitments to the Hotel in advance, unheralded arrivals can be out of luck. We need your cooperation. We don't want to be placed in the position of turning a member away at the last minute.

We will be at the CARA INN which is located at the edge of the TORONTO INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT. Registrants for the Bash must make their own hotel reservations for accommodation directly with CARA INN (or any other hotel chosen).

Incidentally, we notice with pleasure that the outside world is still running with the "JOPLIN REVIVAL BANDWAGON". When the hoopla and the hubbub subsides we hope you stay aboard the ragtime train that started long before and keeps on going right down to "the end of the line".

(Continued on Page 4)

THE RAGTIMER is the official publication of THE RAGTIME SOCIETY Inc., P.O. Box 520, Weston, Ontario, Canada, M9N 3N3. All rights of THE RAGTIMER are reserved to the Corporation. Membership is $5.00 per year and includes all issues of THE RAGTIMER published during the current year.

Here we are in the doldrums of summer again. For some, it is time to put up the "gone fishing" sign. But don't let it dull your ragtime spirits. How could it - with the month of July sporting the big ragtime events at St. Louis and Sedalia in the Missouri heartland of Classic Ragtime.

We wish all our members who take summer vacations, a safe and satisfying holiday season.

Finally we direct your attention to the back cover of THE RAGTIMER. Admiration for our amazing friend EUBIE BLAKE causes us to report on the commercial side of Eubie's activities. He is indeed a unique personality - a gentleman who fills us with awe.

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MAKE YOUR PLANS EARLY TO ATTEND

THE RAGTIME SOCIETY INC. 10th ANNUAL BASH - 1974

To be held on Saturday October 19th, at TORONTO, 3:00 p. m. to 1:00 a. m.

In the CARA INN located on the east side of the Toronto International Airport.

The entire lower floor complex of the hotel will be available for the Bash
Foyer - Connecting Corridor - Guildhall - Peel Room
3 Pianos - Continuous Bar

PLEASE NOTE: Dinner will be served at 6:00 p. m. SHARP
(Latecomers cannot be served)

Price $12. 50 per person (Bar service costs not included)
Free parking for cars

We will be issuing a dinner ticket to be picked up with your registration. Be sure to keep it handy. It will be needed for surrender to hotel staff at the table when the meal is served.

Ragtimers should plan to make the CARA INN the place to stay. (The hotel has 211 guest rooms with color TV) - It then becomes the place where you are most likely to meet your fellow Ragtimers.

Room rates per day are as follows: $21. 00 - Single
$27. 00 - Double or Twin

(See Hotel Reservation Card)

There will be two large meeting halls and the opportunity for simultaneous activities.

Arrangements have been made to obtain the use of the Peel Room (complete with piano) on the Friday evening, October 18th, as a reception and warmup centre for members arriving in the city a day early and for the use of local members who wish to drop in and say Hello. The anticipated time will be 7:00 p. m. to closing.

On Sunday afternoon October 20th accommodation will be available from 1:00 p. m. until 6:00 p. m. for an afterglow fellowship period of our visiting members in particular. Local members are welcome to attend.

Please mail your registration and remittance in advance (by October 4th). Keep in mind that registration acceptance may have to be limited to advance registrations.

Ragtimers who decide to stay at the CARA INN have until October 4th to arrange with the Hotel for firm registrations. Reservations sought after that date will be possible but less certain. Some of our local Ragtimers may also wish to become a CARA resident for that weekend. Be sure to mention The Ragtime Society when making your reservations.

The BASH is a "Ragtime Must". The registration form is attached to this issue of THE RAGTIMER.

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JOHN ARPIN APPLIES HIS MUSICAL TALENT TO A NEW VENTURE IN ENTERTAINMENT

John has assumed a major role in setting the entertainment fare at Toronto's newest luxury hotel, "THE PRINCE". The hotel is Japanese-owned and recently, in the presence of government and diplomatic dignitaries, was formally opened to the public by the Emperor of Japan's daughter. Some more traditions of Japan have been brought to the city for our mutual enjoyment.

A new venture not withstanding, John still has to operate under the demanding standards of a critical press. Even as local ragtimers yearn for more of John Arpin in the role of a solo artist, so it seems to be with music and entertainment critics. The following are excerpts from Blaik Kirby's "NIGHTLIFE" column in THE GLOBE AND MAIL for Friday, July 26, 1974.

"PRINCE STRESSES ENTERTAINMENT"

"At last, Toronto has a luxurious new hotel that is stressing entertainment. It is the Prince, at Don Mills and York Mills Roads, which has three rooms with entertainers and seems set on a policy that should make it the city's top-ranking hostelry.

In recent years we have seen the almost equally luxurious Hyatt Regency go up, with as little entertainment as possible, and the drably commercial Four Seasons Sheraton with far more rooms but few entertainers. The Prince breaks what had seemed a depressing trend.

Le Continental dining room has taken the unusual step of hiring a string sextet in what seems an obvious bid to establish a level of gentility and luxury unmatched elsewhere.

The strings seem to be merely present rather than participating. Arpin's piano is always the centre of attention, and the strings seem to be merely padding for the sound.

Arpin is concerned to keep the separate identity of his trio, to which the strings are added, and he does it by starting each set of dance music with the trio only. But that should be enough; once the string players get into the act, they should get right in. The sound system, which might give the strings more prominence, is still incomplete, but the unobtrusive string arrangements must also be changed.

Arpin is such a skilled pianist, with such a wide range of capabilities, that I also suspect it is frustrating for him to be playing bland, backgroundish dance music. Surely there should be occasions for him to take centre stage, and to play something intended to be listened to, not just heard.

Le Continental is a sinfully luxurious room, with burnished copper walls, velvet seats and menus, and platoons of staff.

In addition to leading the band in Le Continental, Arpin also plays solo in the Brandy Tree from 5:30 to 8:00 p.m."

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by
TEX
WYNDHAM

Jazzology JCE-73 "Dick Wellstood Alone"

Selections: Viper's Drag, Squeeze Me, Poor Buttermilk, Atlanta Blues, You Can't Lose A Broken Heart, Carolina Shout, Russian Rag, Fig Leaf (A Classy Rag), South Amboy Highball, Cheatin' On Me, Dollar Dance.

C. K. Records AR 3204 "Runnin' Wild", by Charlie Rasch

Selections: Runnin' Wild, Georgia On My Mind, Maple Leaf Rag, Sister Kate, The Carolina Shout, Memories Of You, Blue Turning Grey Over You, King Porter Stomp, Singin' The Blues, You're Lucky To Me, Honeysuckle Rose.

AR 3204 is available @ $5.50 from C. K. Records, 1000 S. 7th Street, Ann Arbor, Michigan 48103.

Vanguard SRV 310 SD "The World Of Scott Joplin", by Max Morath

Selections: Reflection Rag, Frog Legs Rag, Palm Leaf Rag, Kinklets, A Breeze From Alabama, Golden Hours, The Ragtime Oriole, Searchlight Rag, The Pippin Rag, Top Liner Rag, One For Amelia, Broadway Rag, The Chrysanthemum, Maple Leaf Rag.

Dick Wellstood's LP of distinctive solo improvisations, mostly on compositions by prominent ragtime composers, does not claim to be a "ragtime" album. Indeed, Wellstood's playing, though generally based on the "Harlem stride" ragtime style, is looser, hotter, and somewhat more modern than ragtimers are used to.

Nevertheless, I find Wellstood's concepts thoroughly in keeping with the nature of the tunes and therefore of interest to readers of this column, particularly those who like traditional jazz piano as well as ragtime. The almost impressionistic ride given to Confrey's "Poor Buttermilk", for example, fits the "modernistic" outlook which, in the 1920's, Confrey injected into many of his pieces. Similarly, Wellstood's accelerated tempo to close Cobb's "Russian Rag" captures the light-hearted nature inherent in the notion of "ragging the classics".

Technically, Wellstood's mastery of the keyboard is nothing short of stupefying. Lightning-fast stride passages and tricky, flashy right-hand figures are tossed off with a sense of ease and stomping rhythm reminiscent of Fats at his best. An impressive performance.

Charlie Rasch also draws heavily on well-known ragtime composers for his inspirations, which remain comfortably within the traditional idiom with no attempt at the type of updating that Wellstood provides. In fact, Charlie's straight-ahead stride and great big sound are not unlike those of piano rolls -- but without the inflexible rhythm and lack of dynamics so often found in machine-made music.

Charlie's right-hand work leans in the direction of the white "novelty" pianists of the 1920's, occasionally venturing into the high treble for juicy single-note runs. Combining these effects with steady, pulsing rhythm, Charlie turns in a creditable solo LP of bright, cheerful, middle-of-the-road ragtime that all but the strictest classicists, on the one hand, or the most jazz-oriented ragtimers, on the other, ought to enjoy.

Max Morath, known primarily as an entertainer, again demonstrates his considerable skill as a pianist in his album of maturely interpreted, sensitively played, brisk-stepping solos on fourteen "classic" rags. Sticking primarily to the printed scores, Max brings out all of the grace and charm in the compositions as well as ragtime's light, jaunty spirit.

Four "classical" ragtime composers are represented from the midwestern school, Joplin heading the list with six titles including a few seldom-heard gems like "Reflection Rag". Two tracks are Morath originals, including the haunting, bittersweet "One For Amelia", dedicated to Joseph Lamb's widow and fully capable of appearing beside Morath's marvelous reading of Lamb's majestic "Top Liner Rag". An excellent LP of vintage ragtime, fully up to the exacting standards of Max's previous recordings.

Nonesuch H71284 "Piano Music Of George Gershwin", played by William Bolcom, deserves brief mention here for several reasons. First, Bolcom has an enviable reputation in the ragtime field. Second, Gershwin's one rag, "Rialto Ripples", a 1927 collaboration with Will Donaldson, is included. And third, "The George Gershwin Song Book" (1932), which comprises side one of the LP and consists of one chorus each (two on "Liza" and "I Got Rhythm") of eighteen of Gershwin's best-known songs, is a veritable catalogue of ragtime effects used by the better white pianists of the 1920's. These tracks are really too short (about a minute each) for satisfying listening, and there isn't much ragtime on the LP overall, but advanced pianists (particularly those who have the music) will probably find this material, and Bolcom's excellent performance of it, interesting and useful.

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THE TENTH ANNUAL NATIONAL RAGTIME FESTIVAL
GOLDENROD SHOWBOAT - ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI 1974

By Betty Meyer

Who could dream on that hot August night in 1965 that the Goldenrod Showboat would ever repeat or recapture that night's excitement? The occasion was the first National Ragtime Festival and, having stood in line to get aboard, we sat through seven continuous hours of ragtime, first on the front deck and then (after the regularly scheduled melodrama had let out) in the theatre. In those days the second deck was not open to the public, being the private domain of old Captain Mencke, who sat in his chair on the gallery surveying with distaste the crowd which had invaded his home.

Seven hours of ragtime music performed by some of (or at that time most of) the leading practitioners of the art was unheard of, except of course on records or rolls played in one's own living room. It was an exhilarating experience, and one that those of us there are likely never to forget.

Some of course like St. Louis's own Professor, Trebor Tichenor, Don Franz and Frank Pierson, did dream. As a result, during the week of July 9 through July 14, 1974, the Tenth Annual National Ragtime Festival was held. It was a fitting celebration of earlier dreams. Although some things were the same - the dowager boat, Old Man River, Eads Bridge celebrating its centennial year, Robert the Waiter (an artist in his own right), many of the performers, the heat, the crowds - the excitement was enhanced by the fact that this was the year that the whole world had discovered Scott Joplin.

Turk Murphy's San Francisco Jazz Band headlined the program in great style with Pete Clute on piano and Bob Helm on clarinet and soprano saxophone. Fittingly, they played lots of ragtime in addition to their standard Jazz fare - Euphonic Sounds, Kerry Mills' Ragtime Dance, Solace, the Entertainer, Snake Rag and others. Over the weekend they alternated in the theatre with the Salty Dogs from Chicago, always favorites at the Festival.

The Saint Louis Saints (Glenn Meyer, clarinet; John Gazzoli, piano, etc.) opening the second deck barroom Tuesday night, played to a packed house and finished to a standing ovation. Next night it was the Tiger Rag Forever Jazz Band (another St. Louis aggregation), followed on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday nights by Don Havens' Mudcats with Jean Kittrell at piano.

As always, the St. Louis Ragtimers hosted the Festival from their place in the first floor barroom. In addition to regulars Trebor Tichenor, Al Stricker on banjo, and Don Franz on tuba, they were joined each night by drummer Bob Kornacher. A treat to St. Louisans, after several months absence, was to hear the full band on Friday and Saturday nights with cornetist Bill Mason and clarinetist Glenn Meyer.

It was a festival replete with fine ragtime and blues pianists. In addition to those already mentioned as playing with the various bands, we were privileged to listen to the artistry of Bob Wright, Butch Thompson, Terry Waldo, Dave Jasen, Dick Wellstood, Knocky Parker, Charlie Booty, and Ben Conroy. Dick Zimmermann (in Missouri to make final arrangements for the Sedalia Festival) was able to appear at the Sunday afternoon concert much to everyone's pleasure. Also, happily on hand for the concert was Jan Douglas, who played Pastime Rags numbers 1, 2, 3 and 4.

To borrow from the Chad Mitchell Trio, it was one helluva festival - very well-planned with everything running on schedule, more than well-attended (some people were turned away each evening or elected to put their names on a waiting list and to wait in line as much as an hour and a half), and abounding with good music by good performers. The spirit of the first Festival was there, only this time it was six days instead of seven hours! Ragtime is alive and healthy, thanks to those who dreamed and kept it alive through the lean years.

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In the January/February issue of 1974, of THE RAGTIMER, we spoke of the discovery by Tom Noel that Scott Joplin's remains are buried in an unmarked grave. (See SCOTT JOPLIN FORGOTTEN). Member Eric Winston of Adamant, Vermont, sent in an article by Alan Rich from the magazine "New York" of June 10, 1974 which is concerned about the commercial exploitation to ragtimer. Mr. Rich begins his article with the news that the American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers (ASCAP) has ordered the cutting of a headstone for Scott Joplin's grave and that a dedication ceremony is being planned.

"RAGS TO RIP-OFFS

Scott Joplin's music will survive, but the exploitation by record companies, ad agencies, and the media is depressing.

Walk through Times Square any night, and you'll hear "The Entertainer" blaring out at you from every record store in the area. Switch on your television set, and you'll hear ragtime as background for some of the fanciest commercials (Kodak most recently,

with an orchestration blatantly patterned on the style of the Red Back Book). ASCAP has discovered Scott Joplin's grave, an unmarked grassy spot in St. Michael's Cemetery in Queens, has ordered a headstone cut, and will conduct a huge dedication ceremony at which Eubie Blake (who knew Joplin) and Marvin Hamlisch (who obviously didn't and still doesn't) will appear. Vera Lawrence, who edited the big Joplin edition that the New York Public Library issued a few years ago, tells me that every piano teacher she knows now uses Joplin rags instead of the "Minuet in G". Vera also tells me, holding her nose, that she is constantly besieged by people wanting to set lyrics to some of the more famous rags. Fortunately, she retains approval rights over the music. Her good sense may make her even more valuable to the ragtime revival in the future than her great deeds have up to now.

We are, in short, in the middle of an incredible revival of ragtime - especially of Scott Joplin's music. You can attach any significance you want to the revival, all the way up to a return to the past born of a Watergate-drenched cynicism toward the present. The music, of course, will outlive the current hoopla, as Beethoven's did his bicentennial. It is glorious music, rich and inventive, and its use by piano teachers is bound to produce a marvelously sophisticated new generation of pianists. (And a very dexterous generation: have you tried to match the left- and right-hand rhythms in that seemingly simple piece called "Solace"?) But the exploitation of that music that is now going on, in which record manufacturers, advertising agencies, moviemakers, and the whole media industry are implicated, has its depressing aspects nevertheless. One of the most depressing, in fact, is that Joplin himself figures so little in all this. His name is unmentioned in most of the promotion for THE STING. But that's only a part of the silliness.

I cannot believe, for example, that the distinguished organist E. Power Biggs had the idea, all on his own, to produce for Columbia an album of Joplin rags played on the pedal harpsichord, with Mr. Biggs appearing on the cover in a funny hat trying to look like Cap'n Andy in Showboat. Obviously, Columbia needed a Joplin record of some sort - the company had turned down the Red Back Book recordings by Gunther Schuller that are one of the biggest sellers in Angel's history - and Biggs probably allowed himself to be conned. In any case, his playing is stiff, lifeless, devoid of the gentle rhythmic sense that is the essence of ragtime playing.

R. C. A. 's entry is equally unfortunate, a dreary, scholarly dissection of several rags (Joplin, mostly, but also including a few later pieces like Jelly Roll Morton's "King Porter") played on two pianos by Paul Hersh and David Montgomery. Hersh, the violist with the original Lenox Quartet, is decent enough at the keyboard, but the style of the music is nowhere apparent. Obviously, the aim here was to continue the notion propounded by Josh Rifkin and Bill Bolcom on their pioneering Nonesuch records: that the best way to bring Joplin's music to life is to play it as serious, elegant repertory devoid of its honky-tonk implications. But neither Hersh nor Montgomery seems to have access to the underlying spirit that makes the Rifkin and Bolcom records work.

Angel, which was dopey enough not to hire Schuller for a follow-up to the Red Back Book, has come along instead with another Joplin-and-confreres collection by a pickup aggregation called the Southland Stingers; the "Stingers" is clearly an attempt to cash in on the success of THE STING. But this record, too, reeks of the rip-off; the manner is

sleazy, the orchestrations thick, the playing dull. All it really does is to cancel out everything we've found out about the real qualities of this music, and to return it to the ambience of the beerhall and the strawhatted waiters.

The best of the recent ragtime records, however, happens to be a second volume by Schuller and his ensemble of students from the New England Conservatory. Schuller has made up an album of his own orchestrations, very much in the Red Back Book style, and he is still better at this than any of his imitators. The ensemble is marvelous; you know that every member is a superb technician, and yet together they have worked out an insinuating way of slurring and sliding - like the Vienna Philharmonic playing Johann Strauss - that gives the music marvelous warmth. The record is on the Golden Crest label, a small company and not very well distributed, but it should not be overlooked.

Vanguard has also reissued some of its fine Max Morath records in a two-record Album. Morath has been overlooked in this whole revival, but he was playing Joplin rags as good, serious music ten years ago. In his one-man shows, he still found it necessary to bring in some of the honky-tonk atmosphere. But on records his playing is neat, clean, and loving."

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SEDALIA!

AN OLD RAILROAD TOWN WITH A SOMEWHAT SHADY PAST

(Reprinted from THE MIDWEST MOTORIST/JUNE, 1974 and written by DICKSON TERRY. The article was sent in by member Craig Huber of Overland Park, Kansas as the timely story of a town and its wrestle with fame.)

"Sedalia, the county seat of Pettis county which is in the center of Missouri and pretty much in the center of the United States, doesn't have a lot of great claims to distinction but those they have are interesting. They include, for example, a black ragtime musician, a hunting dog that could understand English, and, of course, the annual Missouri State Fair.

At one time they used to point out that Sedalia was the birthplace of Jack Oakie, but visitors don't hear much about that anymore. But, for the record, they do list quite a few other favorite sons of whom they can be justly proud. Such as Raymond "Pete" Brandt, for years head of the St. Louis Post-Dispatch Washington Bureau and one of the most respected newspapermen in the country, who died just recently; Dale Carnegie, who taught the world how to win friends and influence people; Bernarr McFadden, who taught the world how to have impressive biceps; John Parker, who invented the machine gun, and Senator George Vest, who immortalized himself along with a coon dog named Old Drum.

But it has only been in recent years that Sedalians have come to realize that perhaps their most enduringly famous citizen was a piano-playing Negro named Scott Joplin, the the man who originated ragtime music.

Scott wasn't a native son; he was born in Texarkana, Ark., in 1868. In his youth he wandered about the country, playing the piano in saloons and other interesting establishments, and after a season at the Chicago Exposition of 1893, he wandered into Sedalia.

A jazzy old town

This wasn't just a coincidence. It ties in with another distinction which, when you bring it up today, causes many Sedalians to change the subject. But the fact is that at the turn of the century Sedalia had a national reputation, especially among railroad men, as Fun Town. Sedalia was a division point for two railroads, the M. K. T., and the Missouri Pacific, and both shops employed several thousand workers who had money to spend.

Main Street, down by the tracks, was really the Main street in those days, a street where the lights were on all night and the sounds of music, gambling, drinking, and whatever drifted out on the night air. It was a street that no lady went near after dark, but railroad workers, both black and white, and not a few local bloods jammed the night clubs and over-flowed onto the sidewalks.

And just across the tracks were several blocks of small houses that comprised a district known to and popular with railroad men from coast to coast.

One of the clubs along Main Street was the Maple Leaf Club, a large room with a mahogany bar running its length, some tables, a dance floor for high steppers, and a pretentious cut-glass chandelier.

It was here that Scott Joplin started playing his new kind of music, and in no time at all the Maple Leaf was turning the crowds away. The style of music had no name at the time. Joplin referred to it as "raggin". Then it was called "ragged time", and finally ragtime. His first big hit was "Maple Leaf Rag", a sheet-music copy of which today would buy you a Rolls-Royce. But as ragtime swept the country the sheet music for this and other Joplin compositions were sold by the hundreds of thousands. They sold so well, in fact that Joplin virtually quit playing after a few years and devoted himself to composing rags.

Sedalia was a little late in catching up with the ragtime revival of a few years back, not to mention the revived fame of Scott Joplin. But by 1961 they had gotten the message and the Chamber of Commerce erected a stone marker at the site of the Maple Leaf Club down there by the tracks. The site is now a parking lot. The granite marker was erected in tribute to Scott Joplin, the composer, and John Stark, the publisher, of Maple Leaf Rag, and other ragtimers who flourished in Sedalia, "the cradle of the classic rags."

A festival this year

And this year, July 25-27, Sedalia will hold its first ragtime festival. A lot of big names have been recruited and the festival should attract the attention of ragtime fans everywhere.

The town's name, Sedalia, is not, as most people presume, an Indian word. In fact it isn't a word at all, in the proper sense, and it doesn't mean anything.

In 1833 a man named George Smith, after losing his money in a bank venture back East, came to Pettis county to improve his fortune. He settled in a little place called Georgetown, six miles or so from what is now Sedalia. In 1857 George Smith learned that the Pacific railroad (now the Missouri Pacific) was coming that way and he tried to get the people of Georgetown to pick up and move to where the railroad was going to be built. No one was interested. Georgetown was the county seat. Smith told them they would live to see the day when bats and owls would make their home in the Georgetown courthouse.

In 1857 Smith bought 160 acres, at $13 an acre, beside the railroad right of way. He started selling lots, but there were no buyers. But when the railroad came through in 1860, Smith was vindicated. In a few years the new town took over the county seat, and the Georgetown courthouse was inhabited by bats and owls until it was finally demolished.

Sedville to Sedalia

Smith doted on his daughter whose name was Sarah Elvira. He called her by the pet name of Sed, and he was determined the town would be named for her. So he called it Sedville. The name didn't go down with anybody, and neighbors tried to get him to change it. According to one of several versions of the story, it wasn't until Smith made a business trip to St. Louis that he changed the name to Sedalia. One might surmise that the St. Louis bankers saw a good thing in the new town and its location, but not with a name like Sedville.

So it became Sedalia, "The Queen City of the Prairie," and six other towns around the country liked it well enough to adopt it, whether it means anything or not.

The center of town has long since drifted from Main Street and the tracks up Ohio Street to the public square which is now the center of town. In the center of the square, on an expanse of green lawn, is the courthouse, a pleasing and imposing example of classical Roman architecture. Three sides of the square look clean and prosperous. On the fourth side is the deserted YMCA building, fallen into decay since railroad days.

When the Pacific railroad became the Missouri Pacific and went on westward, the railroad made Sedalia a division point and built its shops there. A few years later the Katy railroad came through and also built its shops there. During the first half of the century, the railroads were the mainstay of the economy. Then, as hard times hit the rails, the Katy railroad closed its shop, and a few years later the Missouri Pacific did the same.

By 1957 it appeared that Sedalia had no way to go but down. But the city fathers rallied and called in a firm of industrial planners who laid out an industrial park and a 20-year plan for reviving the economy. Today Sedalia has more than 50 small and medium-sized industries, turning out such diverse things as barber supplies, dried buttermilk, brooms, commercial refrigeration units, floor wax, flour, fertilizer, ceramics, overalls, glass blocks, chain link fence, thousands of baby chicks, and many other products.

A new prosperity

"Sedalia had 30,000 people 30 years ago, and it has 30,000 people today," said James Denny, a native son who has a prosperous insurance business and who is president

of the Sedalia Historical Society. "And that," he added, "just suits us fine." There is virtually no unemployment nowadays and as you drive around town you see street after street of middle class houses with green lawns and big trees, all well kept and freshly painted and looking as though Andy Hardy might step out of any one of them.

Sedalia has two well-stocked libraries, 55 churches, a modern hospital, 15 motels and one excellent hotel on the public square, a new jail, a new post office, and a new Federal office building.

It has one newspaper, the Democrat-Capitol, which is housed in a new plant with carpets on the floor of the newsroom and the hushed atmosphere of a church, all of which is a far cry from the past.

Sedalia has had a colorful parade of newspapers and editors through the years, but none has compared with J. West Goodwin, who came with the boom days before the turn of the century. Goodwin put out a paper called The Bazoo, and its motto was in keeping with his temperament: "He who tooteth not his own horn, same shall not be tooted." The paper gained a measure of fame far beyond Sedalia, but to the people of Sedalia, who bore the brunt of his frank style of reporting, he was a thorn in the side of civic pride, and in time Goodwin and Sedalia parted company by mutual agreement.

His ad got results

But he had a good time while he was there. One day a citizen complained to Goodwin that his want-ad had brought no results and he wanted his money back. Goodwin refused and said he would prove the man was wrong. In the next issue he inserted a want-ad offering to pay $5 for a bulldog, and signed the man's name to it.

When the citizen went to his office the next morning, he found two boys, waiting with dogs, to collect the five bucks. Pretty soon there was a steady stream of men and boys and barking dogs on the sidewalk and out into the street, all yelling for their money. The man finally had to call the police for help.

Goodwin had a ne'er-do-well son whom he finally kicked out. He didn't hear from him for several years and then came a telegram: Some skies are blue, and some are dark. Send me fifty, your son Mark. The old man fired back an answer: Some skies are blue, and some are pink. I'll send you fifty. I don't think. They just don't make newspapermen like that any more.

The Winning of the Fair

When Sedalia began to boom as a railroad center, Sedalians began to feel their oats. Having taken the county seat away from Georgetown, they set out to get the state capitol. When they lost out to Jefferson City, they set their sights on the state university. When it went to Columbia, they still wouldn't give up. They went after the State Fair - and won.

In 1899 the Fourth General Assembly announced that bids would be open for a state fair. Sedalia had two advantages. It had been holding its own county fair since 1880, and it had 130 acres of fairground to donate to the enterprise. The state legislature chipped in $15,000 to finance the first fair which opened in 1901.

The big attraction that year was an automobile with a daredevil driver who did all kinds of speedy and fancy driving around the track. In 1907 "The Best Airship in the United States" was the main attraction. The balloon, with its daring astronaut went up every afternoon - provided the wind didn't exceed 12 miles an hour. And then, a year later, the Wright Brothers. Orville and Wilbur, came with their airplane and flew over and around the fairgrounds.

In the early days the fair, except for one special attraction, was pretty much an agricultural show. Except for a carnival midway, it remained so for a good many years, and there came a time, a couple of decades ago, when state fairs were being looked upon as anachronism. But auto racing was added to the horse racing, then motorcycle racing. Then came entertainment in for the form of name bands (now Rock and Roll bands), well-known singers and other entertainers, and all kinds of circus acts.

Today, says Roy Jones, the current director, the State Fair has become show business, and putting it together is a year-round operation. Things once thought to be anachronististic have become some of the fair's biggest assets. City folk now flock to the fair in large numbers to show the youngsters the animals and birds that produce such things as milk and eggs and pork chops, something most city kids have never seen. In fact, one of the fair's biggest attractions is the poultry building where 150 live chickens are hatched every day and where people stand in line to view the phenomenon. That's something you won't see at Disneyland. As usual, the fair comes late in August, 10th to the 25th, and, anachronism or not, it still attracts an audience of nearly 300,000 every year.

Jim the Wonder Dog

Fame of a most unusual sort came to Sedalia back in the 1930s through a dog named Jim, no doubt the most famous and enigmatic dog in canine history. Jim has been dead since 1937, expired, perhaps, from old age and mental exhaustion. But his memory is still alive in Sedalia, where he spent most of the 12 years of his life, and in other places too. Because even today an occasional stranger will drop in at Scott's Bookstore and pay $2.45 for a paperback called "Jim the Wonder Dog".

Newspaper and magazine writers came from all over the country to write about Jim; they came wi th skepticism and left shaking their heads. He was observed by psychology professors at Washington University and the University of Missouri. They didn't try to explain him.

In the lobby of the Bothwell hotel, where oldtimers check into the comfortable leather chairs every afternoon, they'll talk about Jim at the drop of his name. "But", one of them told me, "you had to see what that dog could do to believe it. You can go ahead and write about Jim, but nobody's going to believe you."

Jim was owned by a man named Sam Van Arsdale, a hotel man who operated hotels in Sedalia, Marshall, and several other central Missouri towns. Jim was an excellent hunting dog, and his exceptional abilities came to light on a hunting trip. Tired, Van Arsdale said to Jim, as a hunter will to his dog, "Let's sit under that hickory tree and rest." Jim walked over to the hickory tree and sat down. Bemused, Van Arsdale told Jim to show him an oak tree. Jim did. In turn he picked out and put his paw on the trunks of a walnut tree, a pine tree, and even a hazel bush.

As time passed Jim's amazing powers were further revealed. He could pick out any man's auto parked on the street. "I'll never forget the day I bought that new Model A", an old timer spoke up. "Right out of the agency, Van Arsdale said, 'Jim, find this man's new car,' Jim trotted down the street, stopped and put his paw on the fender."

In time Jim could pick out cars by their license numbers. Van Arsdale, or the car owner, could write the number and put it on the floor and Jim would trot up and down the sidewalk until he found it.

Wherever man and dog went, crowds would gather. Jim would pick out the man in the brown suit, the man smoking a cigar, and even the man who was a stranger in town.

"I remember the day," said the desk clerk, a middle-aged woman, "when I saw a crowd on the courthouse lawn. I had just bought a new red raincoat. When I joined the crowd, Mr. Van Arsdale told Jim to pick out the lady in the new red raincoat. That dog walked right over to me and put his paw on my knee."

A multi-lingual marvel

For the benefit of a crowd on the square, Van Arsdale told Jim to go in the drug store and pick out a Saturday Evening Post. Followed by the crowd, Jim looked over the magazine rack, put his paw on the right one. On daily trips to the cigar store, Jim would walk to the counter and point to his master's brand, no matter how often the clerk would shift the boxes around to try to confuse him.

He followed instructions written in Greek, German, and French - as well as English, of course - and in one test Van Arsdale allowed himself to be covered with a sheet and let others write the instructions. Jim always came through. Van Arsdale turned down vaudeville and movie offers; in fact he wouldn't even bet money on what Jim could do. He refused to exploit the dog for money. For seven years in a row, Jim, looking at a list of entries, picked the winner of the Kentucky Derby. But Van Arsdale refused to even answer the hundreds of telegrams that came each year, offering him money for Jim's selection.

Jim died in 1937. He was buried in a specially built casket and a headstone marks his grave, "Jim the Wonder Dog - March 10, 1925, March 18, 1937." And a goodly crowd surrounded the grave. You could look it up."

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Scott Joplin and his Maple Leaf Rag made Sedalia world famous. We hope the return of classical ragtime to Sedalia this summer will make its present day citizens proud of their ragtime heritage.

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MINI BASH 74

By William McCrostie

The Toronto Mini Bash Committee (including Gail and Pell Bell-Smith, Isabel Dickson, Isabelle Stewart, Zella Connell, Austin Kitchen and Russ Merifield) put on another great party on Saturday, June 1st, at the Royal Canadian Curling Club.

As the early birds arrived, they were greeted by the sounds of an electric player hard at work on some fine old piano rolls - all courtesy of Austin Kitchen.

The evening got under way with a special treat - Bob Darch who took time to drop in before going on to his playing engagement in the Times Square Lounge. Austin Kitchen and Bess Fell then took over on twin pianos and we were off and running. Jack Cuff and daughter Isabelle Stewart, Mark Wittmann, Ron Davis, and Idamay MacInnes kept the pianos going. Danny O'Connell on trumpet and guitar, and Bob Williamson on drums added to the fun.

A tip of the ragtime hat to Gail Bell-Smith and her committee from the over sixty members (no pun intended) and friends who experienced a thoroughly enjoyable evening.

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LETTERS

Letters are welcome from members. Excerpts believed to be of general interest are passed along in this section of THE RAGTIMER.

I thought you might like to know that Seabury Press will publish a history of ragtime to be written by Trebor J. Tichenor and me tentatively titled, RAGTIME: AN ORIGINAL AMERICAN MUSIC.

My new album, ROMPIN' STOMPIN' RAGTIME (Blue Goose 3002) should be released within the next couple of weeks.

Looking forward to seeing you all again this October.

David A. Jasen
Flushing, N.Y., U.S.A.

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On Sunday, May 5, the Peabody Conservatory of Music in Baltimore, Md., held its Outdoor Festival, an annual event at which such things as handicrafts, home-made baked goods, and second-hand books, records, and sheet music are sold in aid of the school's scholarship fund.

Groups of Peabody students performed throughout the afternoon - a brass choir, a woodwind ensemble, a dance troupe - but a kind of electricity came over the gathering when seven young musicians set up their music-stands in the breeze-swept plaza and struck up "The Cascades", by Scott Joplin.

The leader, Jari Villanueva, introduced the group as the Peabody Ragtime Ensemble - flute (doubling on piccolo), clarinet, trumpet, trombone, tuba, piano, and drums. Villanueva, who played trumpet, organized the group last year and wrote the arrangements himself.

The ensemble continued with "Original Rags", "Reflection Rag", "The Strenuous Life", and "The Entertainer", and attracted the largest crowds and the most enthusiastic applause of the afternoon.

William Hyder
Baltimore, Md., U.S.A.

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In the May/June 1974 Ragtimer there is a remark preceding the article or review "Brass Quintet Lively, Slap-Happy", which says "Even so, there is still a lingering uneasiness in responding to the rendering of classical ragtime when ..... and especially when performed in a hallowed place."

I am an organ builder and am organist of the First Unitarian Church in Louisville. I thought I might bring to your attention some things that we have done in the past year.

The central topic for the 23 September 1973 service was "Affirmative Humanism", and in trying to find music that would be especially appropriate for this service, I decided that a ragtime piece would be an excellent example. In addition to working out well in the context of the service, people really enjoyed hearing it.

Later on we decided to devote an entire service to ragtime, relating it to the Black experience in America. February 10 is "Race Relations Sunday", so we planned it for that day. One thing not noted on the program is that for the Rag-Time Dance two dancers (both Black) worked out the dance steps and a tenor from the choir sang the words. For the offering, everyone was invited to get up and dance in the aisles to Grace and Beauty, and they did! The service was a resounding success, and as a matter of fact, the attendance was greater for that service than any other in the past six years!

For the final service of the year (there are no services during July and August), we decided to include some experiences that were significant during the past year, and so several ragtime numbers were included. Again for the offering everyone was invited to dance.

I have included programs for the services I mention above. With best regards,

Terry Borne
Louisville, Ky., U.S.A.

CAPSULE INFORMATION RELEASES ---------- FOR HAPPY HUNTING

NOTE: We often receive information from members and other sources which can be passed along in brief form as items of possible general interest. CAPSULE INFORMATION RELEASES do not refer to items or material which can be obtained from the SOCIETY. Further, we do not guarantee the accuracy of the information given. Under the conditions stated, we are able to publicize a broader coverage of promising information coming to our attention.

Magazine - JAZZ JOURNAL AND JAZZ & BLUES - a British publication by Novello & Co. Ltd., Borough Green, Kent, England (monthly). The U. S. mailing agent Air & Sea Freight Inc., P. O. Box 1425, Long Island City, N. Y. 11101 (Ragtime is an included subject.)

LP Record - IT'S RAG TIME - Number 4 in the JAZZWAYS Series - Chuck Folds, piano and Jackie Williams, drums, 11 tracks (Includes Sunflower Slow Drag, Panama Rag, JRM Medley, Heliotrope, R. T. Nightingale, Mule Walk, Carolina Shout, Russian Rag) (U. S. Price $6. 95) JAZZWAYS 47-20 Bell Blvd., Bayside, N. Y. 11361, U. S. A.

LP Record - BANJO RAGTIME & OTHER CLASSICS - Banjar Records - Stereo BR1781 - Box 32164/7440 University Ave. N. E., Minneapolis, Minn. 55432 (U. S. Price $5. 50) (Includes Mississippi, Wild Cherries, Calliope, King Chanticleer, 12th Street, Hungarian Dance No. 5, Flight of the Bumble Bee, Sabre Dance)

Future Records - Al Mothershead of DIRTY SHAME RECORDS (Box 5217, Hannegan Station, St. Louis, Mo. 63139, U. S. A.) advises that two piano solo records will be released in September: BOB WRIGHT - KRAZY KAT AND OTHER RAGS DSR 1237 and TERRY WALDO - SNOOKUMS RAG DSR4552 (See SOMETHING DOING for Terry's Whereabouts.)

Book - The Art of Ragtime by William J. Schafer and Johannes Riedel - (cloth bound, 250 pages) deals with "Form and Meaning of an Original Black American Art". Published by Louisiana State University Press, Baton Rouge, Louisiana, U. S. A. 70803 ($10. 00 in U. S.)

LP Record - New Black Eagle Band - GHB59 - The New Black Eagle Jazz Band consists of a group of Boston area business and professional men and includes Society member, Dr. Eli Newberger (See Something Doing). Record can be ordered directly from the band group (U. S. price postpaid $5. 50) at 128 Front Street, Marblehead, Mass. 01945.

LP Record - Finger-bustin' Ragtime - Dave Jasen - Blue Goose 3001 - 54 King Street, New York, N. Y. 10014 (U. S. price postpaid $5. 95). Dave plays 16 rags including some of his own.

SOMETHING DOING...

JOHN ARPIN - Solo piano in the Brandy Tree, The Prince Hotel, Cor. York Mills & Don Mills Roads, 5:30 to 8:00 p. m. Then leads band in Le Continental Dining Room, Mon. to Sat.

DON EWELL - at the Life Lounge, 3233 N. Ocean Blvd., Fort Lauderdale, Florida, with Andy Bartha and the Deep South Dixieland Jazz Band.

DAVE FLOWITT - at the Brunswick Hotel, 481 Bloor St. W., with the Climax Jazz Band, Wed. 9:00 p. m. to 1:00 a. m.

JIM KAPLAN - at the Pizza-Stein, 1428 W. Galena Ave., Freeport, Illinois on Tues., Fri. and Sundays.

JOHN MADDOX - at Cherry Creek Inn, Denver, Colorado, August 19 to September 21.

BOB MILLS - at The Norseman, 1125 Dundas Highway East, Mississauga, Mon. to Sat. 9:00 p. m. to 1 p. m.

MIKE MONTGOMERY - at The Dakota Inn, Rathskeller, Detroit, Michigan Friday nights.

MAX MORATH - on the road with his new show "The Ragtime Years".

DR. ELI NEWBERGER - and The New Black Eagle Jazz Band at the Stickey Wicket Pub, West Main Street, Hopkinton, Mass., Thurs. 8:00 p. m. to 12:00 p. m. (Pianist is Bob Pilsbury.).

TOM NOEL	- on the road with his living portrayal show "Mark Twain at Home".
CHARLIE RASCH	- with Sister Kate, at Littel Caesars, 15060 Eureka Road, Southgate, Michigan, Friday, Saturday and Sunday nights.
TOM SCHMUTZLER	- and the Hardware City Temperance and ragtime Society, at Shakey's Pizza Parlor, Vernon, Conn. - Fridays and Saturdays.
BOB SEELEY	- at Charlie's Crab Restaurant & Lounge, 3230 Pine Lake Road, Orchard Lake, Michigan, Monday thru Saturday.
STEVE SPRACKLEN	- at Canadian National's Hotel Macdonald, Edmonton, Alberta thru summer 1974.
DAN SUMMERS	- and the New Charleston Chasers (with the ODJB sound), at Speak Steak House, Whirlpool St. at Cleveland Avenue, Niagara Falls, N. Y., Saturday nights and some Friday nights.
TREBOR TICHENOR	- and the Saint Louis Ragtimers, on The Goldenrod Showboat, at St. Louis, Missouri.
TERRY WALDO	- at Deibel's Restaurant, German Village, Columbus, Ohio, Wednesday and Thursday nights.
BRADLEY WEAGE	- at the Red Garter Salon, Cedar Point, Ohio, Monday thru Sunday until Labour Day.
TEX WYNDHAM	- and The Red Lion Jazz Band, appearing regularly, at The Surrey Restaurant, 1101 Philadelphia Pike, Wilmington, Delaware.

PERFORMERS: Please keep us posted on your whereabouts and your schedule will appear in this column.

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THE RAGTIME SOCIETY APPLAUDS A BUSY 91 YEAR OLD EUBIE BLAKE.
- HE'S DONE IT AGAIN! -

EBM-5 Eubie Blake / Live Concert

This new LP marks the first commercially released live concert recording in Eubie Blake's entire career. It was taped on May 22, 1973 at a concert sponsored by the Yesteryear Museum, New Jersey. In the recording studio Eubie generates plenty of excitement, but in live performance, another dimension is added. This is aptly explained by John Wilson, jazz critic of The New York Times: "....after more than seventy years in show business, he reacts to an audience like a fire horse to an alarm."

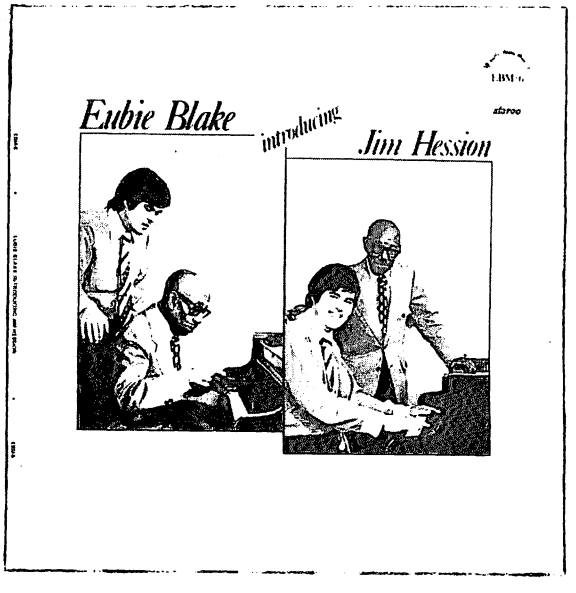
Included on this record is the world premiere performance of a brand new work, *Rhapsody In Ragtime*, along with Eubie's usual reminiscing between numbers. It is during these enrapturing talks with the audience that he conveys his recollections of the origin of ragtime, replete with short demonstrations at the piano. He also tells about his years on Broadway as a composer of musical hits.

New Release!

SEND TO: **Eubie Blake Music**
284-A Stuyvesant Ave.
Brooklyn, N.Y. 11221

Composer/pianist **Eubie Blake** — at ninety-one — is the last surviving pioneer of the ragtime era. In conjunction with producer **Carl Seltzer**, he formed **Eubie Blake Music**

RECORD NUMBER	TITLE
EBM-1	Eubie Blake Featuring I.H. Browning
EBM-2	Eubie Blake: Rags To Classics
EBM-3	Eubie Blake And His Friends
EBM-4	Sissle & Blake: Early Rare Recordings
EBM-5	Eubie Blake / Live Concert
EBM-6	Eubie Blake Introducing Jim Hession

EBM-6 Eubie Blake
Introducing Jim Hession

New Release!